

THREE COUNT

**Professional Wrestling Newsletter@
by Alex Marvez**

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Three count begins weekly publication

GAINESVILLE -- I want to start the weekly publication of Three Count with a sincere thank you to those who have subscribed to what I hope will be an informative, news-breaking wrestling newsletter. I want to begin this first issue with some background on myself and my decision to begin publishing.

I became a wrestling fan when I was five-years-old, which was 15 years ago. Of course, living in Miami, we only could watch Championship Wrestling From Florida on Saturday mornings. But, in retrospect, that was just fine. The wrestling was simply fantastic, the wrestling angles (the skits used to get the idea of a feud "over" to the general public) were awesome and Gordon Solie was the best announcer in the history of the sport. My interest waned some in 1983, but I was quickly rejuvenated by the expansion of the World Wrestling Federation. Wrestlers who I had only read about or saw pictures of were suddenly appearing on local television. I followed wrestling closely until 1987, when an event happened that changed my life.

I attended a show February 25 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Overshadowing the fact I got to see an incredible brawl between Bruiser Brody and The Original Sheik that went throughout the arena was my introduction to the Wrestling Observer Newsletter. It was (and still is) the ultimate "insiders" wrestling newsletter. It opened my eyes to new aspects of the wrestling industry, like backstage politics, how a wrestling match is worked, the history of the sport, etc. Having that knowledge led to me meeting many of the backstage figures of wrestling. Slowly but surely, I have established a group of friends and sources in the sport, which resulted in The Miami Herald giving me permission to do the wrestling column that appears every Sunday (and on other days in other parts of the country). Right now, I am a junior at the University of Florida, who could not produce this newsletter without the help and understanding of my girlfriend, Carol.

Your subscription to Three Count indicates a desire to find out more about professional wrestling from just the constant shilling and outrageous lies told on television each week. I am going to give that in this newsletter and also try to give an understanding of how the wrestling business works. There will also be up-to-date information on pay-per-view shows, breaking news stories, television tapings and a weekly spotlight on a smaller wrestling promotion (like the USWA in Memphis, Big Time Wrestling in Portland, Joe Pedicino's Global Wrestling Federation and foreign promotions from Japan and Mexico). There will also be a question and answer section and a place for readers to voice their comments on the wrestling business.

I would really appreciate any response to Three Count with compliments, criticisms or suggestions. Also, any match results sent in will make the newsletter, with comments or descriptions of the matches encouraged. By the end of the year, I hope to be introducing some graphic changes in the newsletter that will make it more eye-pleasing and easier to read. Please bear with me until then. And once again, thanks for subscribing.

Summer Slam continued from Page 5
cellmate throughout the remainder of the card. The Mountie gimmick is being dropped, because of pressure from the real Mounties.

6. The L.O.D. became the first tag-team to ever capture the WWF, NWA and AWA tag-team titles by defeating The Nasty Boys. Finish came when Hawk pinned Saggs (who had arthroscopic knee surgery a couple of weeks before the show) after their on-the-shoulders clothesline. Fans actually chanted L.O.D. without the Pavlov's dogs music, but their name means nothing at the box office. A good match.

7. Irwin R. Shyster (IRS) pinned Greg Valentine with a small package. The less said the better.

8. Hulk Hogan and The Ultimate Warrior defeated Sergeant Slaughter-General Adnon-Colonel Mustafa when Hogan pinned Slaughter. Special referee Sid Justice dwarfed everyone, including Hogan. Justice's status as a good guy was reinforced by his fair calling of the match, but there was good heat when Hogan and Warrior bumped into the former Vicious one. It was a lousy wrestling match, but one couldn't expect too much from these five. Finish came when Warrior chased Mustafa and Adnon to the dressing room (where he was consequently fired) and Slaughter was pinned with Hogan's leg drop. Hogan and Justice then posed, reinforcing that muscular appearance in the WWF is not important. Finally came the marriage of Randy Savage and Elizabeth, which had been plugged all night. The WWF had even set up a 900-number for people to call. About half of the 18,000 people at Madison Square Garden were filing out as this was going on. As most of you probably know, Savage and Elizabeth have been married since 1984. Still, this looked good on television, even though the WWF's pay-per-view broadcast was cut off three-minutes early in most parts of the country, because the show had gone past its allowed two-hour, 50-minute time slot.

Another amusing show from the WWF, which I give a 7. Your responses are encouraged.

Three count/Page 2 Letters

When Sama Simba came to the WWF, it wasn't long before one or more of the commentators "recognized" him as Tony Atlas. Yet the same recognition has not occurred with Irwin R. Shyster, who was part of the WWF tag-team champions with Barry Windham. The same thing with Colonel Mustafa, who used to be the WWF champion as the Iron Sheik. Why is this? Also, I was a little disappointed that your recent mention of Brian Pillman in The Miami Herald made no mention of his weight. He is always billed at 226 pounds, but I think he's closer to 126.

Lionel Goldbart, Miami Beach

AM: The WWF usually tries to ignore the past of most of the wrestlers it brings back, because it makes the wrestler seem "fresher" and also dilutes any memory of their past exploits. However, if the WWF feels it will benefit their wrestler, they may acknowledge his past. One example is Kerry Von Erich, who was originally going to be called The Texas Tornado with no reference to his real name. The WWF, though, wanted to capitalize on Von Erich's popularity in Texas, so they let him keep his name. Pillman weighs about 215 lbs., not 226. Almost all wrestling promotions inflate their wrestlers' weights.

I will be glad to answer any questions anyone has about the wrestling business or run letters with reader's comments. If anonymity is requested, please indicate so on the letter. Any advertisements for video tape or magazine trading will also be run free of charge.

Three Count is a professional wrestling newsletter published four times a month. Price for subscription is \$6 for one month, \$18 for three months, \$33 for six months and \$66 for one year. Please address all subscription checks to Three Count and send them to P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla., 32604-0795. Please include Name, age, address and phone number.

CLASH OF CHAMPIONS RESULTS

1. El Gigante won a 15-man battle royal, eliminating Oz and The One Man Gang simultaneously with a clothesline. Not good. Oz (Kevin Nash) now has dyed blond hair and no mustache, which makes him look like Dustin Rhodes on large quantities of steroids. Barry Windham, who is main eventing most WCW live shows in upcoming weeks, was eliminated early for some unknown reason. Oz and Gang pounded on Gigante for a while, and turned their back on him as he leaned on one knee in a corner. Gigante jumped up and administered an awful clothesline (Oz had to jump over the top rope to get eliminated) to win.

2. Flyin' Brian Pillman returned to WCW and advanced to the final of the fictitious WCW junior heavyweight tournament by pinning Bradstreet (Brad Armstrong). A great match, but Pillman's career seems doomed in the junior heavyweight division. Throughout the broadcast, Jim Ross basically referred to the division as a place where guys who couldn't make it in the heavier division wrestle. There were a couple of awesome maneuvers during the match, including 'Street suplexing Pillman from the ring onto the arena floor and Pillman nearly breaking his rib cage while jumping outside the ring onto 'Street. Pillman pinned him with a crossbody block from off the top rope.

3. Sting pinned Johnny B. Badd (Mark Merro) in a match that lived up to Johnny's last name. Badd's ring entrance is a hoot, and he's even added a confetti spritzer and exploding stringie bombs. Unfortunately, his ring performance was typical of a guy who has wrestled for less than six months. Making the match even worse was Merro spraining ligaments in his ankle, so when Sting tried whipping him into the turnbuckle, Merro fell down. Both screwed up the finish. Cactus Jack was supposed to pop out of the dreaded box that was rolled to ringside (one day they must put a refrigerator in the thing), push Theodore R. Long, clothesline Cactus Jack and clobber Sting. Instead, it ended up with both

Three Count/Page 3

Merro and Sting staring at the box until Sting cradled Badd out of nowhere for the pin (even that didn't look that good). Sting wasn't very good throughout the match, refusing to sell (act injured) when he landed across Merro's knees earlier in the bout.

While Sting was pinning Merro, Cactus Jack popped out of the box, hit Sting and threw him to the arena floor. Then came one of the most awesome moves of the year -- Jack elbow dropped Sting from the second rope to the arena floor. Ross made it sound like Sting's career was over.

4. Ricky Morton defeated Mike Graham in another semifinal for the junior heavyweight title (the Pillman-Morton match is scheduled for Oct. 27 at Halloween Havoc). Another reason the division is doomed -- Graham is billed as a top competitor even though he doesn't mean didley on a national basis or wrestled regularly in years. Graham looked fine and the match was OK, but once again, the finishing sequence was messed up. Morton kicked out of a rolling reverse and Graham was supposed to go flying into the turnbuckle. Unfortunately, Graham ended up stopping and then picked up momentum again for the turnbuckle crash.

Bill Kazmaier then came out to break some sort of world strength record (no one's quite sure what it is, or why four WCW security guards carried a globe in front of Kazmaier as he walked to the ring). Anyway, the record was supposed to be Kazmaier bending the thickest pipe of all-time around his neck (some would argue Kazmaier's head is the thickest). After setting this exciting record, Arn Anderson and Larry Zbyszko clobbered Kazmaier in the ribs with a 45-pound weight lifting plate.

5. The Freebirds defeated The Patriots when Jimmy Garvin pinned Chip. A horrible match with two wrestlers (Chip, a.k.a. Curtis Thompson and Todd Champion) who aren't ready for the big time yet. They plugged a match between The 'Birds and The Patriots on the Sept. 7 World Championship Wrestling show for the U.S. Tag-

Continued on page 4

CLASH(from page 3)

Team titles without acknowledging The Patriots' capture of the titles at a WCW television taping. Finish came when Hayes hit Chip with an elbow smash while The Firebreaker had Garvin covered.

Then Paul E. Dangerously interviewed Cactus Jack, who said he had destroyed Sting. Out comes another refrigerator box, which Jack said was probably Abdullah the Butcher (who also popped out of a box a few weeks earlier to attack Sting). As Jack taps the box, Sting comes bursting out and the Cactus Jack show starts again. Jack took a backdrop on the wooden ramp leading to the ring, and was then hip-tossed six feet to the arena floor. Sting and Jack brawled to the dressing room, with Jack dumping a garbage can on his foe in the process. A great angle, but it was rushed. How can anyone believe Jack can beat Sting if the former WCW champion can laugh off a "devastating" elbow drop?

6. Finally, Ron Simmons and Lex Luger start getting mentioned. After all, their two-of-three falls match is headlining WCW's next pay-per-view show. Before Simmons' match with The Diamond Dudd, err., Studd, they show a highlight film of Simmons having his jersey retired at Florida State (he was an All-American nose tackle in 1979 and 1980) and Bobby Bowden did an interview hyping the Luger-Simmons match. They also showed footage of Simmons driving 150 children from a Boy's Club to the matches Aug. 25 at the Omni in Atlanta. Simmons then convincingly disposed of the Studd, and then grabbed the microphone to challenge Luger. Harley Race and Mr. Hughes come out, but Simmons said he was going to look for Luger himself and left the ring.

7. Van Hammer then debuted and defeated Terry Taylor in a match that showed everything that is wrong with pro wrestling today. Van Hammer looks like Sammy Hagar on steroids. He carried a guitar to the ring and was almost an exact clone of The Ultimate you-know-who. Only The Warrior has more wrestling ability. Hammer had only one previous match, and it showed. Taylor bounced off him for two minutes until

Three Count/Page 4

getting pinned by Hammer's bombs away (a move Ray Stevens used to do in the 1960s, a knee drop off the top rope onto the opponent's chest). Ironically, it was that same move that Hammer broke his ankle performing a few months ago in his first match. Expect Hammer to receive a big push because of a good fan reaction, but look for his long-term popularity to equal that of P.N. News.

We then caught up with Missy Hyatt, who was scheduled to interview Lex Luger. Simmons came bursting through the door, but was pushed out by Luger's entourage. Then came an awesome sequence that saw Simmons breaking into a three-point football stance, breaking through the door and getting pulled apart from Luger.

8. Steve Austin pinned Tom Zenk after hitting him with brass knuckles. No one cared, but Austin is awesome.

Then came the contract signing between Luger and Simmons for their main event at Havoc. Sitting next to Simmons was his wife and Dusty Rhodes, who has always tried to capitalize on everyone else's popularity. After Luger and Simmons both signed, Luger said he would offer Simmons a position as a chauffeur after the bout. Just what wrestling needs -- more unnecessary racial stereotyping when it's been proven that nonsense doesn't sell tickets in the 1990s. Luger and his posse escaped to a limousine while Simmons chased after them.

9. The Enforcers beat Rick Steiner and Kazmaier for the vacant (and meaningless) WCW tag-team titles when someone pinned Kazmaier. The story is Kazmaier showed great intestinal fortitude by entering the match and trying to compete. After the match, Anderson had a priceless comment, saying it's great to see two "journeyman" wrestlers win the title.

Overall, it was a fairly amusing show, but like everything else WCW does, it seemed rushed and not thought out well. On a scale of one-to-10, I gave it a 5. Any comments on the show would be greatly appreciated.

FLAIR-HOGAN BOUT SET FOR OCT. 25; MATCHES AROUND COUNTRY TO FOLLOW

The first Ric Flair-Hulk Hogan match is scheduled for October 25 in Oakland, Calif., with subsequent matches scheduled for Los Angeles and Madison Square Garden in upcoming weeks.

The early date is somewhat of a surprise, because it's hard to imagine a Flair-Hogan feud that begins now lasting all the way through until Wrestlemania VIII. Flair, the seven-time World Championship Wrestling heavyweight champion, was scheduled to begin wrestling in the WWF on the group's television tapings Sept. 9 and 10. There will be an update on Flair's appearance in the next issue, which will be mailed Sept. 13. A Flair feud with Roddy Piper will also come to pass. Flair and Piper had a legendary feud in the North Carolina area in the early 1980s. Hogan is currently out of action until his return bout with Flair, as he is filming a movie. The promotion of Flair has also changed slightly. He is now being billed as the "self-proclaimed champion," which takes some of the shine off the confrontation between the two most influential wrestlers of the 1980s.

JUSTICE-ROBERTS FEUD TO HEADLINE WWF THIS FALL

With the sudden "suspension" of The Ultimate Warrior and the reluctance of Randy Savage to return to a full-time wrestling schedule, Sid Justice will enter a feud with Jake "The Snake" Roberts. Justice was originally scheduled to feud with The Undertaker this fall, but those plans have been put on hold (which is probably a good decision, considering there is no momentum for a feud between the two right now). The Taker will now feud with Jim Duggan.

There is nothing new on The Warrior's situation, other than World Championship Wrestling is uninterested in signing him.

Three Count/Page 5

SUMMER SLAM RESULTS

1. Texas Tornado-Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat-British Bulldog d. Power and Glory-The Warlord when Steamboat pinned Roma with a cross bodyblock. A pretty good opener with good "heat" from the fans.
2. Bret Hart captured the intercontinental title by pinning Curt "Mr. Perfect" Hennig. Curt has stopped taking his Hulk Hogan vitamins in wake of a serious back injury, and looked noticeably lighter. This was the second best match in the WWF this year, trailing only the Randy Savage-Warrior match at Wrestlemania VII. Hennig was incredible because he was working in so much pain. He will be out three-to-six months with the injury. Hart was excellent as well. After some exciting near falls, Hart made Perfect submit to a half Boston crab.
3. The Natural Disasters defeated The Bushwhackers. The match was mainly to establish Andre the Giant as the Disasters rival and to begin a Legion of Doom-Disasters feud. The L.O.D. rushed the ring after Earthquake (John Tenta) pinned Luke.
4. Virgil defeated Ted DiBiase to win the Million Dollar Belt. The match was very good, and not because of Virgil. The booking (storyline) of the match was great. After Sensational Sherri hit Virgil with her dreaded loaded purse, referee Hebner sent her to the dressing room instead of disqualifying DiBiase like everyone thought he would do. Hebner was soon knocked down and DiBiase taunted and punished Virgil with suplexes. Roddy Piper, who was obnoxious all evening, was actually good here, cheering Virgil on. Finally, when DiBiase tried slamming Virgil into a turnbuckle with the padding removed, Virgil reversed the hold and pinned him.
5. Jacques Rougeau said good-bye to his Mountie gimmick by losing to The Big Boss Man and getting sent to a New York City jail. The match was pretty average, but the post-match skits with Rougeau were great. They showed him getting carted away by police, booked and thrown in a jail cell with a supposedly gay

Continued on Page 2

Notes: Suncoast Pro Wrestling is offering Three Count readers two free tickets to its Sept. 28 and Oct. 26 shows at the Manatee County Civic Center in Palmetto, Fla. For tickets, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Henry Raines at 5748 14 Street West, Bradenton, Fla., 34207. Suncoast Pro Wrestling features Lou Perez, Tommy Rodgers and Dean Malenko as some of its top stars, and can be seen on WBSU in Sarasota (Channel 62) on Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. and on WTTA (Channel 38) in Tampa on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 4 p.m. Henry is selling a tape of three Suncoast shows for \$17.50. Write for more information.

World Championship Wrestling had a nightmarish weekend on the West Coast. The Phoenix show, which sold only 350 tickets, had to be canceled because the ring was broken. The Oakland show drew only 600 people paid and \$6,000. I'm sure Los Angeles was a little better (1,700-2,000 fans) but the cost of running these shows is phenomenal when compared to how little they make.

WCW is looking for a new building to promote Miami shows in. The Knight Center has been disastrous, with a paid crowd of 758 on their Aug. 21 show. Look for shows in late November in Miami and Key West.

The Clash of Champions drew a 3.7 rating, which is fantastic considering the poor lineup and almost nonexistent hype on WCW's weekly shows. There was talk that if this show didn't come close to a 4.0 rating, the future of the Clashes was in doubt. Things appear better now. Expect the Halloween Havoc to do about a 1.0 buy rate, which translates to about 160,000 homes paying \$19.95 a pop, i.e. \$3.2 million. The Havoc commercials are awesome.

Mr. Fuji and Coach (John Tolos) have both been let go from the WWF. Demolition Crush (Barry Darsow) has been given a new character - Repo Man. The gimmick was originally used in Eddy Mansfield's International Wrestling Federation (Sunshine Network, 11 p.m., Fridays), but when the WWF was sent a tape of the gimmick, they trademarked it. Pretty funny stuff. In case you couldn't recognize him, Steve Keim is The Skinner.

Next Issue: The next issue will be sent out three days from now, with future issues also being mailed on Fridays. Because of the large amount of pay-per-view news to catch up on, I decided to hold off the spotlight section until next time. If anyone wants to contribute to the newsletter by writing the spotlight section, let me know. Next issue I will have the lineup of Halloween Havoc, how Ric Flair did at the WWF's television taping and much more. See y'all in one week and thanks for the support once again.

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P.O. Box 12795
Gainesville, FL 32604-0795